

**St. Conrad and St. Roch**  
**Third Order of St. Francis**

**TERTIARY SAINTS' SERIES**

**NUMBER ELEVEN**



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**PUBLISHED BY**

**BEAU OF TERTIARY LITERATURE**

**ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH**

**TWENTY-THIRD STREET AND WOODLAND AVENUE**

**CLEVELAND, OHIO**



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*Censor Dep.*

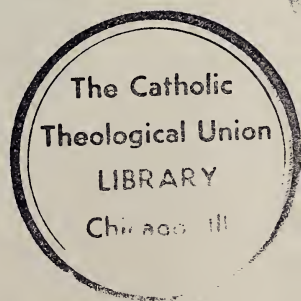
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Cincinnati, Die 10 Junii, 1919.

†Henricus Moeller,

*Archiep.*

"You, countless Tertiaries, who though remaining in the world are united to us by a bond at once both spiritual and seraphic, since you have made your profession to follow the Rule of the Third Order, which our Holy Patriarch himself drew up for the well-being and salvation of souls; do all in your power, each of you according to your condition in life, to keep up amid the darkness and dangers of the world the seraphic spirit by diligently observing what the Prince of the Apostles ordains in these words, 'Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood.' For by those three virtues of concord, commiseration and charity, as by a spiritual ornament, you will render your souls more beautiful; and on the day of retribution before the Sovereign Judge our Holy Father St. Francis will recognize them as his own."—*Most Rev. Father Seraphim Cimino, Minister General of the Friars Minor.*







St. Conrad of Placentia.

## ST. CONRAD OF PLACENTIA, TERTIARY OF ST. FRANCIS.

† 1351.

**S**T. CONRAD was a native of Placentia, a beautiful city of sunny Italy. He and his consort belonged to the noblest families of the country; both were of equal rank and virtue, both had been blessed with pious parents. They spent their days in works of charity, in labor, and love, and prayer, interspersed with simple amusements. Thus they lived in perfect harmony, serving their Creator in joy; but God had a great trial in store for them.

One day, when St. Conrad was hunting, he commanded his attendants to set fire to some brushwood in order to drive out the game that he thought had taken refuge there. Unfortunately, a gust of wind drove the flames into a cornfield, then they rapidly spread to the neighboring fields, and caused immense damage. The attendants fled, and St. Conrad, horrified at the impossibility of checking the flames, returned by stealth into the city, no one suspecting that he was the cause of the fire. By the order of the governor, a poor man was taken prisoner who had been found nervously picking up wood near the scene of the conflagration. The evidence against him being judged conclusive, he was condemned to death. He was already on his way to execution, when our Saint, stung with remorse, rushed into the midst of the crowd and declared himself to be the author of the disaster. Having rescued the poor man, he went before the governor, to whom he confessed the whole truth. Being found free from malice he was only charged with imprudence, but sentenced, nevertheless, to repair the damage of which he was the cause. St. Conrad was obliged, in consequence, to sell all his property, and even to give up his wife's dowry—this left him wholly destitute.

St. Conrad truly loved God as the highest and greatest good. Therefore his actions were regulated by that eternal law which is the source of all justice. From the standpoint of the world he could have had a splendid future. Life smiled upon him, and drew before his wondering eyes a most beautiful picture of peace, plenty, happiness, and home. He was of noble birth, he was young, healthy, rich; his many friends loved and esteemed him; his devoted consort clung to him with all the fervor of youthful love. All at once he faces ruin, his delicate conscience cries out against him, but his human nature recoils at the thought of losing everything. Had he remained silent, no one would have known about his mishap in the forest. Why should he confess and then sacri-





Christ the Consoler.



fice all, perhaps even his very life? "He did not foresee, much less did he intend the havoc that he caused; if an innocent man is condemned to death the rashness of the judges must be blamed." These thoughts surely flashed through the excited mind of our Saint, but the grace of God conquered. With one grand effort St. Conrad swept aside the thoughts that assailed him. He confessed that he was the cause of the conflagration, and come what may, he was willing to make full reparation. His love of God gained the victory!

St. Conrad felt the change that came over his life, as the result of his public confession; he felt it keenly. But Christ was his consoler, and he soon knew that the grace of God was working in his soul. His ill luck led him to reflect seriously on the instability of earthly happiness. After some time the bitterness of his mind was changed into sweetness, for our Savior filled his heart with such ardent love of God that God's service now appeared to him as the only thing worthy of his esteem and ambition. He sincerely communicated his thoughts to his virtuous wife, who, moved by his pious sentiments, thereupon also desired to have no other companion in her life and no other consoler in her afflictions than Christ Himself. With the consent of her husband she received the habit of St. Clare in the monastery at Placentia, leaving St. Conrad at liberty to consecrate the rest of his life to God in whatever manner he desired. The Saint was then about twenty-five. He put on the garb of a pilgrim, and retired to a solitary spot where some pious hermits lived under the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis; from them he received the habit of our Seraphic Father. Thus God rewarded St. Conrad and his consort magnificently for the sacrifices they had made out of love for Him. Henceforth the virtues and counsels of Christ as laid down by the example and precepts of His servant St. Francis was the guide of their lives.

From that time St. Conrad made such rapid progress in perfection, that he soon became universally renowned for his sanctity, and was visited in his solitude by numbers of his fellow-citizens. To escape these honors and live unknown, our Saint went to Rome, where he visited the Tomb of the Holy Apostles. Then being guided by Divine Providence he continued his journey and came into Sicily. There the saintly Tertiary fixed his abode in the valley of Noto. He lived in this valley for the remainder of his life, with no other desire than to please God and to love Him as St. Francis had done. Far away from his native city, from his relatives and former friends, St. Conrad could give himself up to prayer and penance without being disturbed by the frequent visits of his fellow-citizens. Near the hut of a certain William Buchior, a rich nobleman who had left the world to lead a solitary and penitential life, St. Conrad erected a hermitage for himself. In his solitude he

worked, and prayed, and fasted, and lived for God alone. Even when disturbed in the midst of his deep reveries, he was meek and kind to every one who disturbed him. He was so pure and chaste, so mild, cheerful, and patient that he seemed rather to be an angel among men, than a poor follower of St. Francis of Assisi.

The fire of charity and brotherly love which burnt with ever increasing ardor in his soul, led him to visit the sick in the nearby hospital of St. Martin, in the city of Noto. His zeal for the House of God, and his earnest desire for the salvation of souls, almost consumed him. Although he loved retirement, and preferred being alone, his charity urged him to spend many days among the afflicted in this hospital; he even lived there for a time. With unusual alacrity he served the sick, he kindly and prudently admonished sinners, and soon learned to be "all things to all men." It especially gave him great satisfaction to be permitted to attend to those whose maladies were most disgusting. He consoled them in their afflictions, directed their thoughts to Heaven, and gave them every attention. Extremely solicitous for the spiritual and corporal welfare of his charges, St. Conrad was even more solicitous for his own spiritual welfare; his body, however, he treated like an enemy, or more truly, as a friend, since he preferred to sacrifice it in this world by scourgings, night watches, fasts and other mortifications, rather than by overindulgence expose it to any harm in the world to come. He would frequently leave the hospital of St. Martin to go back for a time to his hermitage in the valley of Noto.

So entirely had this holy Tertiary consecrated himself to our Lord, that to those who knew him well he seemed to be completely absorbed in God and in His sacred service. Yet, his saintly life did not exempt him from temptations, quite to the contrary he had to encounter the most terrible assaults of Satan. Like St. Jerome, the solitary of Bethlehem, St. Conrad was tried by horrible and continual temptations; these he overcame by redoubling his austerities. Sometimes he would roll himself among brambles and thorns until his body was covered with blood. The devil, confounded and exasperated at his courage, appeared to him several times, loaded him with insults, and beat him unmercifully. The Saint only prayed the more ardently and thus put to flight the spirit of darkness. We need not be surprised that St. Conrad was tempted so severely. The Holy Ghost himself warns us, saying: "Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation."

Even in this life our Lord deigned to glorify His servant by the gift of miracles and prophecy. A famine having broken out in the country, numbers of persons came to his cave in order to implore his help. Touched with pity, St. Conrad turned to our Lord, asking for

bread for these poor sufferers. Immediately angels appeared to him bringing food in great abundance. The report of this miracle at once spread abroad, crowds came to ask for his prayers and repeatedly the Saint obtained sufficient food to satiate thousands of starving people. St. Conrad's miracles, the fame of his sanctity, and the supernatural lights with which he was favored, drew the most illustrious persons to his cavern. The Bishop of Syracuse came one day to visit him that he might judge for himself if public report had exaggerated his sanctity. Not finding the holy Tertiary in his grotto, he carefully examined his poor abode, where he found neither a couch, nor furniture, nor provisions. Soon after, St. Conrad returned to the hermitage. He joyfully cast himself at the Bishop's feet, humbly asking his blessing, and conversed for a long time with him on Heavenly things. Mealtime being come, the Bishop ordered his servants to prepare the provisions he had brought, in order to offer food to the holy servant of God. Then, suddenly turning to St. Conrad, he said with a smile: "Brother Conrad, have you nothing in your cell? What! We have come to visit you, and have you nothing to offer to your guests?" The Tertiary arose at once and gaily replied: "My Lord, I will go and see if there is anything in my cell." And presently he came back with some delicious fresh cakes! The Bishop, amazed at this miracle, received the cakes with reverence as a gift from Heaven. Having partaken of them he gave thanks to God, and declared those blessed who trust in Him.

When St. Conrad came to Noto one Friday to venerate a miraculous crucifix, some libertines invited him to dine with them. But instead of offering him lenten food they had only meat on the table. At the end of the dinner, they laughed him to scorn for having broken the commandment of the Church, either out of sensuality, or excessive simplicity. The holy Tertiary firmly assured them he had eaten nothing but fish, and to prove this he showed them the bones and the scales of the fish that he had eaten. Then it became manifest that He Who at the marriage feast of Cana changed water into wine, wishing to show His good will to married people, for the sake of St. Conrad changed flesh into fish to show how zealously he watches over those who observe the Evangelical counsels.

In search of more complete solitude, our saintly Tertiary spent the last years of his life in the grotto of Pizzoni, one league distant from Noto. More than ever before his life in this utter seclusion was entirely consecrated to penance and contemplation. He took his rest on the ground, with a stone for his pillow. A few raw herbs and a little bread were his whole nourishment. Christ, alone in the Garden of Olives, was his model. He prayed with our Divine Savior in His agony, and im-



Christ in the Garden of Olives.



plored that his own soul through the merits of Christ might be washed clean from the slightest speck or stain of sin.

When St. Conrad was sixty-one years old he felt his death near at hand. An angel came to inform him of the day and hour of his release. Some time before his death, the holy man went to Syracuse to visit the Bishop and make a general confession to him of his whole life. On his arrival at the Bishop's house, the birds came fluttering around him as they did of old when St. Francis went to Mount Alverna, and on his return to his cell they accompanied him the entire way back to his solitude. A few days before his death he dragged himself to Noto, confessed his sins again, received Holy Communion with renewed fervor, and made known to his confessor his desire to be anointed, and to be buried in the church of St. Nicholas at Noto. The time of his death being come he prayed for his benefactors and for the people of Noto, then he prostrated himself on the bare ground and yielded his beautiful soul to God, on the 19th of February, 1351.

Shortly after, the church bells of Noto and of the neighboring city of Hybla rang of themselves, to announce the death of this holy follower of St. Francis. The people of both cities went in numbers to the solitary abode of the Saint, and a contest arose between them as to which city should possess his body. But the words of the priest who told them of the last wishes of the deceased, terminated the dispute in favor of Noto, of which city St. Conrad was later on chosen chief patron. His precious remains, enclosed in a silver shrine, were interred in the church of St. Nicholas.

A hundred and fifty years later, on opening the shrine, the body was found without any trace of corruption. Numberless miracles wrought after his death attested the sanctity of the servant of God, and in 1515, Pope Leo X gave permission to the city of Noto to celebrate his feast. Pope Paul V extended this feast to the whole of Sicily, and Pope Urban VIII to the Order of St. Francis, at the same time giving the title of Saint to Conrad.

St. Conrad is especially invoked for the cure of ruptures, because during his life and after his death, he cured numbers of that affliction. On his feast day in particular, many are healed of this infirmity. Thus the Lord, Who has all the tender compassion of a mother for our sufferings, often bestows in another order on His saints, those wondrous flowers of Paradise, far greater healing power than He has conferred on the lovely plants of the fields and forests.

The Bollandists have republished the life of St. Conrad, written by Vincent Littara of Noto, Doctor of Theology. Peter Mary Campi, Canon of the cathedral of Placentia, has written a much more complete life.



St. Roch of Montpellier.

## ST. ROCH OF MONTPELLIER, TERTIARY OF ST. FRANCIS.

† 1327.

**S**T. ROCH is one of the most popular saints. He is held in great veneration, not only in countries which witnessed his virtues, but in every country of the world. Living among those who were stricken with the plague, his thoughts went beyond the grave to that life after death, when there shall be no grief, nor sorrow, nor hunger, nor thirst, nor pain, and when death shall be no more. A faithful follower of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Roch truly loved the plague-stricken, like the Seraphic Saint, he saw in them an image of the Savior stricken for the sins of man.

Our Saint was born at Montpellier, about 1295. He was of a very rich and noble family. His father, named John, was governor of the city, his mother's name was Libera. The husband and wife faithfully observed the law of God. They looked upon their subjects as children and brothers, and they gave plentiful alms for pious purposes. The general esteem in which they were held, and the abundant possession of this world's goods did not complete their happiness. They were old, and they had no children. They prayed without ceasing to Heaven, less to obtain from Providence an heir to their immense fortunes, than a fervent disciple of Jesus Christ. One day when Libera was at Notre Dame des Tables, making her usual petition before the statue of the Mother of God, Jesus and Mary vouchsafed to grant her prayer. She returned home, announced the good news to her husband, and they both thanked God with tears of joy. Before long the promise of Heaven was fulfilled, and Libera brought forth a child, who was named Roch. On his side a red cross was deeply marked, an indication of his future work and sanctity. Libera understood her duties as a mother, and determined to bring up this child of benediction herself. Trained in virtue by his pious parents, St. Roch grew both in age and grace before God and man. When a mere child of five years, he at times chastised his body, and he habitually deprived himself of all that conduced to softness. Thus he prepared himself to become a docile instrument of the Holy Spirit. His boyhood was spent in the practice of piety, penance, and charity.

St. Roch was barely twenty when God deprived him of his father. His father's last advice is worthy of being compared to that which Tobias gave to his son. "Here I am," said the dying man, "on the point of leaving this life of trial and misery, to appear before my God. As I





The Holy Women at the Empty Grave.



have nothing in the world dearer than you, and as I have constantly taken care to form your character, I think that I ought now to give you some advice which will help you to spend the remainder of your life in piety and innocence. Before all things, devote yourself to the service of God, and mediate diligently on the sufferings of our Divine Lord. Be the stay of the widow, the orphan, and all those in misfortune. Above all, keep yourself from avarice, the source of very many sins. Be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, be the father of the poor, and know that by employing the property which I leave you in works of mercy, you will be blessed by God and man." The pious youth shed tears, promised to faithfully follow this advice, and to cherish it as a most sacred legacy. When he had closed the eyes of his father, he buried the venerable old man with all the pomp due to his rank and fortune. This wound to his affection was hardly healed before God took from him his pious mother. St. Roch bore this second trial with the same resignation and the same noble sentiments as the first.

Left alone and independent with an immense fortune at his disposal, the world was before him with all its seductions and hopes, but our Saint was firm in his resolutions. His heart was set on the things of Heaven. He joined the Third Order of St. Francis, resigned his principality in favor of his uncle, sold his possessions, distributed the price to the poor, and having put on a pilgrim's habit, he went to Rome on foot, to visit the Tomb of the Holy Apostles.

The plague was making fearful ravages at that time throughout the various provinces of Italy. When St. Roch arrived at Aquapendente, he went to the hospital of St. John, which was full of the plague-stricken, and offered himself to the superintendent, named Vincent, to help him in his office of mercy. "I see," said Vincent, "that your charity and faith are not of a common kind, but your youth and delicate health will never endure the hard work and deadly exhalations of this house." "Why," said St. Roch, "is it not mentioned in the Holy Scriptures that with God nothing is impossible? Is it not written that we must practice charity if we wish to stand on the day of the last judgment?" Overcome by these entreaties, and fearing to displease God if he deprived the sick in the hospital of such unexpected help, Vincent conducted the holy Tertiary to the plague-stricken. St. Roch traced on the forehead of each of them the sign of the cross, and immediately they were cured. He then went through the entire city, and in the same manner delivered those whom he visited from this terrible malady. At first a sort of stupefaction took possession of everybody, but soon it was clear that this wonderful power was the result of divine virtue. Everyone blessed God, and the young disciple of St. Francis was venerated as an angel sent from Heaven.



An Angel Proclaims the Resurrection.

To escape the honors which surrounded him, the Saint left Aquapendente secretly. He visited Cesena and other cities of Italy, curing the plague-stricken as he went, and causing many to bless the name of our Lord. At last he arrived at Rome. The mortality there was frightful, the inhabitants were in the greatest consternation. The servant of God manifested himself in the Eternal City by the same prodigies of devotedness and charity, and soon the terrible scourge disappeared before the power of his miracles. After having stayed at Rome a certain time and satisfied his devotion at the Tomb of the Apostles, St. Roch felt himself urged to continue his journey. He turned his steps towards the north of Italy, and visited Mantua, Modena, Parma, and several other cities. Wherever he passed the sick were cured. Then God guided him to Piacenza. As soon as our Tertiary Saint arrived there, he went to the hospitals again, devoted himself to the plague-stricken, and, with the sign of the cross restored them all to health.

One night, when he was quite worn out with fatigue and want of sleep, he threw himself on a pallet to take a little rest, and he heard a voice which said to him: "Roch, My son, you have borne many fatigues for My sake, journeys, cold, hunger, work of all kinds, now for love of Me, you must also suffer great pains in your body."

At the sound of this voice the Saint awoke, and felt as if a ploughshare had passed over his side. After having assisted so many sick people himself, he was at last laid low with a sickness that without intermission caused him fearful sufferings. God also struck him with the plague. Then raising his eyes to Heaven, St. Roch cried out: "Oh, sweetest Jesus! I thank Thee for having vouchsafed to remember Thy servant. I offer Thee this pain and I am thankful for it as a gift from Thy hand. It is thus that Thou dost visit a wretched and sinful creature. This visit is sweet and dear to my soul. Coming from Thee, death is a gain to me." However, his pains were so severe that he could not restrain his moans and groans, and day and night his sharp pangs drew from him piercing cries. Other sick arrived every day at the hospital, taking the place of those he had cured, and being disturbed by the groans and cries of the servant of God, they grumbled, made complaints, and begged him to stop his shrieking and to bear his sufferings with patience as others did. We must here remark that the cries of the Saint were surely no sign of want of patience, but only an involuntary effect of his great sufferings. The outward signs of pain do not displease God, if the soul is resigned and perfectly submissive to His good pleasure. Our Lord Himself, the Divine model of the afflicted, showed many signs of sorrow and suffering during His Sacred Passion.

Not wishing to be a burden to the other sick in the hospital, St. Roch resolved to go away. He summoned his strength, arose from his



pallet and, dragging himself painfully along with the help of his stick, he went out. When he arrived in the street, he was bewildered, he could not take another step, and sank to the ground in an agony of pain. The passers-by, seeing him in this state, murmured against the superintendent of the hospital, accusing him of inhuman conduct, and implored him to again receive the helpless sick man into the hospital. The superintendent declared that he had not turned him out, but that St. Roch had gone away of his own accord out of extreme delicacy. The conduct of the Saint then appeared to have been prompted by insanity, and God permitted that notwithstanding all the good he had done in the city, he should be led out of it as a madman who might become dangerous.

With great difficulty St. Roch reached the neighboring forest. There he fell down, worn out with fatigue, at the foot of a cornelian tree. He rested for some time, then perceiving a small ruined hut, he entered it and said to our Lord: "Oh, God! I know how dear I am to Thy majesty, inasmuch as Thou hast deigned to make me endure pains so justly deserved. I have not treated the sick with all the charity which Thy love deserved from me. Have pity on my weakness, and do not forsake me. Oh, most good Lord, do not leave me to perish, alone among wild beasts." God, Who *never* forsakes those who trust in Him, heard his prayer. A gentle rain began to fall near the door of his hut and formed a little stream. St. Roch quenched his thirst at the streamlet, and washed his wounds, and thus alleviated for a time his racking pains.

Divine Providence employed other means, far more miraculous, to feed the Saint. He, Who took care of the Prophet Elias, and of St. Paul in the desert by sending daily bread by means of a crow, made use of another messenger, more intelligent and not less faithful, to bring at regular times the bread necessary for the subsistence of St. Roch. Not far from his retreat there were some fine country houses, where wealthy inhabitants of the city had retired to escape from the plague. In one of these houses there lived a gentleman named Gothard, a wealthy but God-fearing man. He had many servants, and kept a large pack of hounds. One day when Gothard was dining, one of these dogs cleverly carried off the bread he had in his hand. The gentleman was amused at the animal's action, setting it down as a funny trick, or to great hunger. The dog disappeared rapidly, carrying off the bread in its mouth. The next day and the day after the same thing took place. Very much astonished, Gothard finally determined to follow the animal. He left the table, and took the road which the dog had taken. The animal, guided by the hand of God, made his way to the forest, entered the hut, and put down the bread at the feet of St. Roch, who, in exchange, gave the dog his blessing. Gothard, greatly wondered, he approached the hut,



went in with precaution, and there perceived a poor young man lying on a bed of leaves, unable to move. He began to question him, but the stranger begged him to go away immediately that he might not be infected with the plague. Gothard left the hut, but greatly moved by the ghastly sight he had witnessed, returned and again presenting himself to the servant of God, offered to attend to him and to serve him until he had recovered his health.

Our Tertiary Saint welcomed with humble gratitude the companion sent by Divine Providence. Henceforth the two pious men lived together, encouraging one another by holy conversation, and devoting themselves zealously to prayer and practices of penance. St. Roch, hearing that the plague still raged at Piacenza, resolved to return in order to help the unfortunate city. As yet he could hardly stand, but his charitable zeal supplied his want of strength. He started in the early morning, leaning on a stick, and went slowly to the hospital. There, forgetting past injuries and solely desirous to return good for evil, he visited the sick and, as he had hitherto done, restored them to health by the sign of the cross. He then went through the city healing all who came to him. At sunset our Tertiary left Piacenza and went back to the forest, accompanied by a number of grateful persons. Then all the wild beasts, being also struck by the plague, as if by one accord came to the Saint, and by their suppliant postures asked him to cure them. St. Roch blessed them and they went away healed.

At the sight of all these prodigies the people again conceived a very high opinion of the servant of God. They came from all parts to visit the two solitaries in the forest, to beg the help of their prayers, and to be edified by their practices of virtue. One day, however, St. Roch being now thoroughly cured, received a command from God to return to his own country. The good Gothard was troubled on hearing of this approaching separation, but the Saint consoled him, and told him that it was the will of God. He then exhorted him to persevere until death in the life of prayer and penance which he had embraced; he also gave him wise counsels how to sanctify himself in his solitude. Thereupon the two friends parted for a time to meet again in Heaven. Gothard lived a holy life in his hermitage, and, after his death, his fellow-citizens held him in blessed memory. A picture of him, with that of St. Roch, is still to be seen at Piacenza, in the church of St. Anne.

Faithful to the commands of Heaven, St. Roch returned to Montpellier. He was to pass through one more ordeal before being called to his Heavenly reward. War was then desolating the south of France. Our Saint was so worn out with his austerities and sufferings, that when he arrived in his native town he was not recognized. He was taken for a spy disguised as a pilgrim, immediately arrested, and questioned as to



The Risen Savior Appears to Mary Magdalen.

his extraction, his name, his country, and the object of his journey. The Saint contented himself with quietly answering each question by saying that he was a pilgrim and servant of Jesus Christ. This great reticence, the absolute silence as to his name and country, confirmed the suspicions of his judges, and by the command of the governor he was thrown into prison. St. Roch spent *five* years in a horrible dungeon, at the mercy of his jailers, who subjected him to ill-usage and the most severe privations. Yet a word from him would have sufficed to make himself known to his uncle, the governor of Montpellier, and he might have reappeared in the city surrounded with all the honor due to his noble birth. Like St. Alexis, the servant of God preferred a poor obscure and despised life in the very midst of his relatives, to all tokens of honor and love. From the depth of his dungeon, he poured forth unceasingly hymns of praise and thanksgiving, and asked, through the intercession of our Lady, for patience and constancy to the very end. The governor and his subordinates had completely lost sight of him. When St. Roch felt that his end was near and that his painful pilgrimage was drawing to its close, he asked to see a minister of God that he might receive the Last Sacraments. The priest on entering the prison beheld a supernatural light; the countenance of the poor captive was radiant. After having given him the Last Sacraments, he hastened to inform the governor of the prodigy he had witnessed.

Shortly after the Saint slumbered and saw in a dream a heavenly messenger who said to him: "Roch, the time is come for you to receive the reward of your labors and sufferings, and for your soul to repose in Heaven. God is pleased with you; if you wish to obtain some grace for mankind, asked it from the Almighty before you die, your desire shall be granted." St. Roch awoke, his soul was bathed in holy joy. Always forgetful of himself, and solely occupied with the interests of others, he addressed this prayer to God: "I humbly beseech Thee, Oh, Lord, that whosoever is attacked by the plague, or is in danger of being attacked thereby, shall implore my protection with faith, may be delivered from his sickness, or be preserved from this scourge. I venture to solicit this grace, not because of my own merits, but in the name of Thy mercy and clemency which are infinite." These words were hardly out of his mouth, when he expired, whilst raising his eyes to Heaven and pressing his crucifix to his heart. He is believed to have been thirty-two years of age.

As soon as St. Roch died, his sanctity was manifested by prodigies. The prison again shone with celestial light, angels sang sweet melodies, his body was surrounded with rays of glory, and diffused a sweet perfume. By his side was found a tablet on which an angel had written in letters of gold, the name of Roch, with these words: "I announce



protection and deliverance to all those who, being endangered by the plague, even of the most terrible kind, shall have recourse to my intercession." This sweet and consoling promise is taken up by the Church in her liturgical prayer to the Saint. When the governor was informed of the death of this unknown man, he bitterly reproached himself for having so long delayed to do him justice. He nevertheless wished to ascertain the full truth of the reported prodigies and went to the prison himself. No sooner had he crossed the threshold than he was struck by the glory which surrounded the venerable remains. His glance fell on the celestial tablet and he saw the name of the unknown—it was that of his nephew! The mother of the governor, and grandmother to St. Roch, also hastened to the prison, and uncovering the Saint's side, saw once more the wondrous red cross with which he had been marked from his birth.

St. Roch died in 1327. His sacred remains, glorified in some degree even before the final day of resurrection, were buried with great magnificence. A church was soon built to receive them. From the very beginning God justified the devotion which the faithful paid to His beloved servant by many signs and miracles.

During the Council of Constance, 1414, the plague broke out in the city. Processions and public prayers in honor of St. Roch were ordered, and immediately the scourge disappeared. Thence forward devotion to our Saint spread throughout the whole world. The relics of St. Roch were partly transferred to Arles, in 1399, and partly to Venice, in 1485. Devotion to St. Roch has been approved by several Sovereign Pontiffs. Urban VIII permitted his feast to be celebrated on the sixteenth day of August with a proper Office for those churches which are dedicated to him.

The Bollandists give two lives of St. Roch. One, very short, written by an anonymous writer and of doubtful authority; the other, written in 1478, by Francis Diedo, a Venetian nobleman, governor of Brescia. It was published by Surius, who makes a mistake in attributing it to a Dominican from Bergamo. In this sketch we have followed the life written by Francis Diedo.

May St. Roch intercede for us at the throne of God that we may also walk faithfully in the footsteps of St. Francis! May he procure the grace for us to be perfectly resigned to God's holy will in all afflictions and adversity, so that they may be to us a ladder that leads to the heights of Heaven! May he watch over us and protect us by that same miraculous power which he so often used while sojourning upon earth, and thus preserve us from the plague of both body and soul!





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